WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

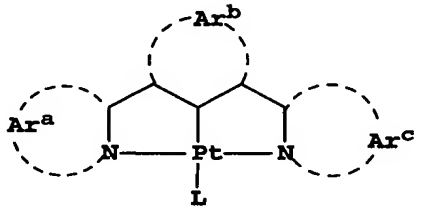
1. An electroluminescent device comprising a light-emitting layer containing a light emitting material that contains an organometallic complex comprising a metal selected from the group consisting of Pt, Pd and Ir, and a tridentate (N^C^N) ligand, wherein the tridentate (N^C^N) ligand represents a ligand that coordinates to the metal through a nitrogen donor bond, a carbon-metal bond, and a nitrogen donor bond, in that order, wherein at least one of the nitrogen donors is part of an aromatic ring or an imine group.

2. The device of Claim 1 wherein the metal is Pt.

3. The device of Claim 1 wherein the organometallic complex is part of a compound containing two or more complexes.

4. The device of Claim 1 wherein each of the nitrogen donors is part of an aromatic ring.

5. The device of Claim 1 wherein the organometallic complex can be represented by Formula (1a),



(1a)

wherein:

Ar^a, Ar^b, and Ar^c independently represent the atoms necessary to form a five or six-membered aromatic ring group; and

L is an anionic ligand.

6. The device of claim 5 wherein Ar^a, Ar^b, and Ar^c independently represent the atoms necessary to form a six-membered aromatic ring group.

7. The device of claim 5 wherein Ar^a and Ar^c independently represent the atoms necessary to form a pyridine ring group.

8. The device of claim 5 wherein Ar^b represents the atoms necessary to form a benzene ring group.

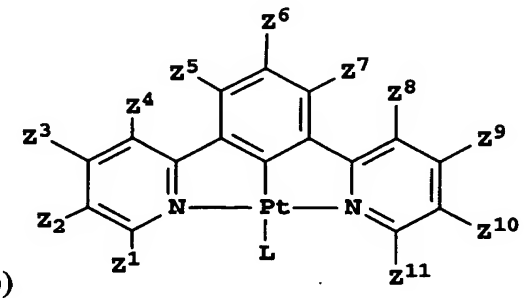
9. The device of claim 5 wherein L represents halogen.

10. The device of claim 5 wherein L represents a substituent that forms a carbon-platinum bond.

11. The device of claim 5 wherein L represents an alkynyl group, an alkenyl group, an aryl group, or an alkyl group.

12. The device of claim 5 wherein L represents RX, wherein X represents a substituent that forms a bond to platinum and wherein X represents N, O, S, or Se, and R represents a substituent.

13. The device of Claim 1 wherein the organometallic complex is represented by Formula (1b),



(1b)

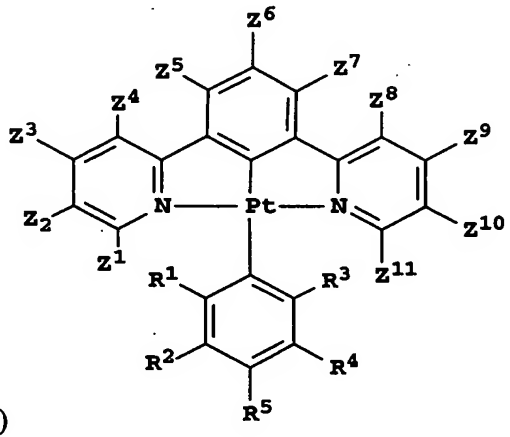
wherein,

$Z^1 - Z^{11}$ represent hydrogen or independently selected substituent groups, provided that adjacent substituent groups can combine to form rings, and provided that Z^4 and Z^5, and Z^7 and Z^8 can also combine to form rings; and

L represents an anionic ligand.

14. The device of claim 13 wherein L represents halogen, an alkynyl group, an alkenyl group, an aryl group, an alkyl group, or RX, wherein X represents a substituent that forms a bond to platinum and wherein X represents N, O, S, or Se, and R represents an aryl group, an alkyl group, a carbonyl group or a sulfonyl group.

15. The device of Claim 1 wherein the organometallic complex can be represented by Formula (1c),



(1c)

wherein,

$Z^1 - Z^{11}$ represent independently selected substituent groups, provided that adjacent substituent groups can combine to form rings, and provided that Z^4 and Z^5, and Z^7 and Z^8 can also combine to form rings; and

$R^1 - R^5$ represent hydrogen or independently selected substituents, provided that adjacent substituent groups can combine to form rings.

16. The device of claim 15 wherein R^1 and R^2 of Formula (1c) combine to form a six-membered ring group.

17. The device of claim 15, wherein R^1 of Formula (1c) is a 1-12 carbon alkyl group.

18. The device of claim 13, wherein R^1 and R^2, of Formula (1c), combine to form a six-membered ring group.

19. The device of claim 13, wherein R^3 and R^4 also combine to form a six-membered ring group.

20. The device of claim 13, wherein R^1 and R^3 independently represent a 1-12 carbon alkyl group.

21. The device of claim 1 wherein the light-emitting material is disposed in a host material.

22. The device of claim 21 wherein the light emitting material is present in an amount of up to 50 wt% based on the host.

23. The device of claim 21 wherein the light emitting material is present in an amount of up to 15 wt% based on the host.

24. The device of claim 1 capable of emitting white light.

25. The device of claim 24 including a filtering means.

26. The device of claim 1 including a fluorescent white light emitting material.

27. The device of claim 1 wherein the organometallic complex contains a quinolinyl or isoquinolinyl group.

28. A display comprising the OLED device of claim 1.

29. An area lighting device comprising the OLED device of claim 1.